

Introduction

The human capital model of socio-economic theory (Schultz, 1961) explains that the migrants tend to move to higher occupational levels and experienced upward mobility than natives at the place of origin. Returnees are more prone to invest in changing occupations after return only if they had saved a significant amount of money to make the most profitable use of their limited resources. However, the early neoclassical economic models (NE) of migration posit that individuals will migrate if the expected utility of moving to an alternative location is higher than the expected utility of remaining in their current location. In recent years, "new economics of labour migration (NELM)" has arisen to challenge many of the assumptions and conclusions of neoclassical theory (Stark and Bloom, 1985; Massey et al., 2015). Under this model, either people seek to migrate abroad temporarily for limited periods of paid labour to remit or accumulate savings in anticipation of an eventual return home. They are generally target earners, and once their earning targets have been met, they return (Constant & Massey, 2002). The new economics of labour migration view return migration as the logical stage after migrants have earned sufficient assets and knowledge to invest in their origin countries. In contrast to NE, which takes the individual as the unit of analysis and considering returnees as 'failure return', whereas, New Economics of Labor Migration theory (NELM) looks at migration at the household level, where households collectively struggle to overcome crises in the absence of suitable credit and insurance markets and indicating returnees as 'successful returnees'. Though the literature views migration and returns migration as a choice of either the individual or the household based on a certain cost-benefit analysis, many return migrants whose labour contract at the destination has expired bound to return. They return before their retirement age neither due to a failure of migration, in the neoclassical sense (NE), nor due to the achievements of the goals of migration as expected in the NELM model.

Migration can promote occupational mobility for both emigrants as well as return migrants. This occupational mobility brings considerable changes in the life of migrants regarding their socio-economic status. Studies found that changed aspirations amongst the returnees resulted in their changes of occupations (Ahmad, 1982; Gillani, 1983; Wilson, 1985). Migrants tend to move to higher occupational levels and also experience upward mobility than non-migrants. Changing occupation after the return is more dependent on the returnee's education level, skills acquired from abroad, savings, duration of stay, social ties, age, etc. (Czaika, & Varela, 2015). Most emigrants are unskilled and uneducated, and hence, they were easily cheated by their agents and ended up doing unskilled work abroad. As emigration to the Gulf region is a contract type migration, definitely there is the possibility of return migration. Because of the temporariness of their movement and the relatively short length of stay, contract workers tend to accept lower-skilled jobs for higher financial returns ((Prakash, 1998). Given the workers' willingness to take the lower-skilled jobs, there is a possibility of 'de-skilling' where overseas workers lose previously held skills (Stahl, 1982; Arif & Irfan, 1997; Sekher, 1999). Workers use their savings to establish farms and businesses upon their return for enhancing their socio-economic status at the places of origin (Rhoades, 1978; Gmelch, 1980).

Two distinct streams of migrants have left India: people with the professional expertise of technical qualifications migrating to industrialized countries in the west, and semiskilled and unskilled workers migrating to the Middle East (Srivastava & Sashikumar, 2003). Kerala had contributed about one-third of emigrants from India to the Middle East, followed by Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal (Zachariah *et al.* 2001). The 2019 data of the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs showed that now Uttar Pradesh has the most significant numbers of emigrants to the Middle East, which constituted around 25 per cent, followed by Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Punjab and West Bengal (Kumar, 2013). However, out-migration from Murshidabad district in West Bengal is a well-established phenomenon that started back in the nineteenth century which gained momentum in recent decades (Ali, 2018).

There is a lack of studies examining the impact of international migration on occupational mobility in the Indian context. The present study attempts to fill the lacunae in the literature by mapping the occupational mobility of emigrants from India by taking the case of Murshidabad- the district contributing to the highest proportion of temporary emigration and return migrants from the Gulf countries in West Bengal. Hence, there is a need to explore occupational mobility and examine the associated factors behind it among the unskilled and semiskilled Gulf return migrants in three phases of migration journeys.

Data

Data was collected from June to November 2019 from the Murshidabad district of West Bengal. Murshidabad district has a population of 1.7 million and consists of 5 Subdivisions (Jangipur, Behrampur, Kandi, Lalbagh, and Domkal) and 26 blocks. Based on the preliminary visit to the areas and in consultation with local people, three blocks, i.e. Beldanda I (Villages-Mohula, Dahakula) (n=75), Kandi (Villages- Gokarna, Hatpara, Purandarpur, Nabagram) (n=125), and Behrampur (Villages-Sahajadpur, Bholia, Saralapara) (n=130) having a high concentration of Gulf migrants were selected. Face to face structured interview scheduled was used to collect the data. A purposive sampling method was used to determine the participants for this survey. The study's inclusion criteria were the respondents should work in any of the Middle East countries for at least two years and returned to their villages at least one year before the survey. At the time of the interview, the returnees had no plans to migrate again. 330 Gulf returnees were personally interviewed by administering structured interview schedules. The schedule focused on the occupational status of the Gulf return migrants in three phases of their life, i.e. pre-emigration, while in the destination and after return phase. In addition to the personal interview, some Key Informant Interviews (with local leaders, Head of the village) and Case Studies have been conducted to understand better. Ethical clearance from the Student Research Ethics Committee (SREC) of the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS, Mumbai) was taken. Informed consent was obtained from the Gulf returnees before the interview and mentioned the purpose of the study.

Methodology

Descriptive statistics were used to explore the returnee's occupational status in three periods of the migration journey. We have used multinomial logistic regression to determine the predictors of occupational mobility among the returnees. The outcome variable was coded as '1' for those who experienced mobility upward, '2' for no mobility and '3' for downward mobility between the pre-emigration and post-return period. The results were presented in the form of predictive probability. Similarly, binary logistic regression has been used to determine the significant predictors of self-employment among return migrants. The outcome variable self-employed was binary coded as '1' for those return migrant who reported 'yes' and '0' for 'no'.

Operational Definition

For analysis purposes, the occupational status at the Gulf countries of returnees has been taken into consideration. Here we got 31 types of jobs of the return migrants at the destination. We have modified the National classification of Occupations (NCO, 2004) which is based upon a classification scheme adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), suitably modified for the Indian conditions, and broadly categorized returnee's occupations at destination into three groups, namely skilled, unskilled, and semiskilled activity. **Skilled occupation comprises** construction workers, carpenters, chemists, electricians, drivers, mechanics, painters, plumbers, salesmen, cooks, and supervisors. **Semiskilled occupations/ Service sectors include** OT helpers in hospitals, AC helpers, chocolate packing, housekeeping, curtain setter, dates processing, mirror workers, bookkeeping in a library, office helpers, water supplier, waiter, security guard, tea boy. **Unskilled jobs** comprised of agricultural workers, cattle rearing, cleaning, gardening, day labour. Returnees who were not engaged in any income-earning activity were addressed as unemployed.

For further analysis occupational status of the respondents in the pre-emigration and the post-return period has been broadly categorized into seven groups, i.e. manufacturer sectors, constructional sectors, self-employed, agricultural sectors, unemployed, driver, daily wage labourer.

Occupational mobility was categorized into three exclusive categories: Upward Occupational Mobility, No Occupational Mobility, and Downward Occupational Mobility. **Upward occupational** mobility refers to returnees engaged as unskilled workers before emigration, acquiring some skills or earning money from abroad, establishing their own business, or engaging in some better job after their return. '**No occupation mobility**' is defined as doing the same job after their return, what they did before their emigration. **Downward occupational mobility** of returnees refers to those returnees who did some skilled work before emigration. Still, due to some reasons, they could not secure a job as per their skill after the return.

In the case of typology of returnees, we have taken into account the reason for the return and post-return activity status of returnees. To calculate the percentage of **failure returnees**, we have considered the reason for return migration as the expiry of contract, low wage, lost the job, worst living and working condition, harsh behaviour of employers, illness and took agricultural activities, construction work, daily wage labour, not getting suitable work, not working due to illness as an occupational activity after the return. For **conservative returnees**, we took reason for return to take care of family/elderly, prefer to work at origin and self-employee, manufacturers, transport/driver occupation as an occupation after the return. Similarly, for **retires returnees**, we have considered missed family as a cause for return from abroad, and too old to work after return in origin as an occupation after the return. To calculate the percentage of **innovators returnees**, we considered the accomplishment of migration goal as the reason for return. We considered those who were engaged in a highly skilled position in place of origin after their return.

Background characteristics of returnees

States and district wise ECR obtained for the Gulf country

Table 1 presents the top 5 states and districts with the highest numbers of workers granted Emigration Clearance for the Gulf countries in India during 2019. Uttar Pradesh has the highest number (112849) of ECR obtained, followed by Bihar, Rajasthan. West Bengal ranked top 4th position in terms of granted ECR (25539) for the Middle East countries. The table also depicts the top 5 districts in the case of obtained ECR. Two districts, namely Gopalganj and Siwan from Bihar, having the highest number of ECR obtained for the emigration to the Gulf countries, followed by Murshidabad district in West Bengal.

Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the return migrants

Table- 2 presents the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the migrants after the return. Most of the returnees belonged to the young age group 20-40 year (72.5%), while the mean current age of return migrants was 35 years. However, the mean age of returnees at the time of return was 32.4 years. Most of the return migrants were young and mostly belonged to the Muslim religion (92.7%) and were married (82.7%). About 68 per cent of the return migrants stayed separately from their parents after returning to the village, while 32 per cent of returnees lived in a joint family after their return to the village.

Further, a higher proportion (40.4%) of returnees were illiterate or did not complete their primary level of education, while about 34.9 per cent of respondents attained primary level of education, and 20.6 per cent of the respondents had a secondary level of education. Most of the respondents migrated to the Gulf countries only once (87.3%), whereas 12.1 per cent of returnees migrated twice to Gulf countries while only 0.6 per cent of respondents migrated thrice. Despite facing many living and working problems, 56.1

per cent desired to migrate again to the Gulf countries. The majority of the migrants stated expiry of job contract (179 people) followed by low wages (198 persons) and missed family (105 returnees), taking care of the elderly (27 people) and accomplishment of migration goal (12 persons) of accumulating sufficient capital for their future was the main cause for their return to villages (Fig-1). This study found (Fig-2) very few (27%) returnees had acquired some skills from abroad. Returnees gained skill in different sectors like carpenter work (2.42 %), constructional work (5.15%), driver (3.33%), sales boy (3.63%), cooking (5.75%) etc. (Fig-3).

Result

Working status of the returnees before emigration, during migration and after return

The working status of three different phases of the migration cycle (pre-emigration, abroad, and after return) of emigrants is presented in Table-3. The percentage of unskilled workers was higher in the pre-emigration phase (62 per cent) than the post-return period (46%). Emigrants were mainly engaged in the agricultural field and day labour during this period. Around 6.4 per cent were involved in construction worksite before emigration. The percentage of daily wage workers was about 7 per cent, and nearly 27 per cent of the respondent reported that they were unemployed before they emigrated to the Gulf country.

"I was unemployed before my Gulf emigration. I cleared my 12th board examination but still was unable to find a good job in my village. My father sent me to Saudi Arabia. I was working in a company as a cleaner. I used to send 700 Riyal every month to my mother. With these remittances, we were able to construct a new pucca house in my village. After four years of my emigration, I returned home since my job contract expired. It has been eighteen months since my return, but still, I am unemployed. Here (village) I could not find any suitable job. I plan to emigrate again as I cannot do cleaning work here in my village, but in my destination place, I would never mind doing a cleaning job." (Montu Da- 25 years old, four years of staying in Saudi Arabia, remained unemployed after returning.)

Unlike other migration streams, gulf migration has one distinct feature: the majority of migrants are unskilled workers engaged in manual jobs that the natives reject. Approximately 59 per cent of the respondents were engaged in cleaning activity (menial work) at the destination. About 6 per cent of returnees were involved in cattle rearing work, and about 13 per cent were secured skilled workers abroad. Among the skilled workers, around 6 per cent were engaged in the construction site, 2 per cent worked as an electrician, and 3 per cent worked as a salesman.

"I spent Rs 80 thousand for getting a work visa. My agent informed me that I had to work as a cleaner in a hospital. So from the first day of my migration journey, I knew about my job profile and accepted it. Most of the villagers are engaged in farming, and they earn very less out of it. In Saudi Arabia, you will get a good salary even for some menial job also. It is better to do a cleaning job there (destination) than doing agricultural work in the village. I used to do overtime to get more money to remit a good amount of money to my wife in the village. But if I had stayed in the village, I would never have achieved what I have today. After returning, I worked in a construction site, but I have to migrate again within few years as I want to earn more money." (38 years old Saudi Arabia returned migrant- Dahakula village)

A remarkable reduction has been observed in the agricultural sector (43%) and day wage labourers (3%) than pre emigration stage after the return. A good number of returnees run their own small business after return (20%). 13 per cent of them were engaged in construction sectors, and 6.8 per cent of returnees were involved in the service sector, specifically as a driver. The percentage of unemployment among emigrants was 27 per cent at the time of pre-immigration, which reduced to 13.6 per cent after the return period.

"I was employed as a house driver in Saudi Arabia for eight years. Every month, I used to earn 1600 riyals and sent 1200 Riyals to my family. I was delighted with my job and salary. My kapil (employer) was also a very good man. I visited home twice in whole my migration period. Remittances helped me to build a new house and to start a business. I returned to the village in 2015. After that, I joined a training course where I learned the process of the purification of water. After that, I started a small business to deliver purified mineral water. Now my business has expanded a little bit. Now, I own a shop and have purchased a water purifier machine to operate my business smoothly. Though I could not use my driving experience after returning but with the remittances from Saudi Arabia, I could lead a better life than before the emigration phase. I am always thankful to Allah for this". (43 years old return migrants, Baharampore Block).

Occupation status of the return migrants before their emigration and while in the Gulf countries

Table-4 presents a significant variation in the occupations of migrants before their emigration and while in the Gulf countries. Before emigration, more than 56 per cent of migrants engaged in agricultural activity. Among them, few managed to secure semiskilled (5.4%) and skilled jobs (21%), but the majority of them got unskilled work (73.6%) abroad. At the same time, 6.4 per cent of them were involved as constructional workers and 7 per cent as a daily wage worker. Around 27 per cent were unemployed before emigration. While in the Gulf countries, primarily emigrants were engaged (69%) in unskilled work. Few returnees managed to do semiskilled (9%) and skilled works (22%) at the destination. From this table, it is clear that most emigrants were not engaged in skilled works at their origin place before their emigration, and also they considered jobs whatever came to them at the destination. They even accepted menial jobs in the Gulf countries.

Occupational changes in the pre-migration phase and the post-return period

Significant changes in the occupations of migrants were seen between the pre-migration phase and the post-return period in Table-5. Sizeable proportions were unemployed (27 %) before emigration, but this percentage reduced to 13.6 per cent after the return. Among the 89 unemployed emigrants before emigration, around half were unemployed after the return, because firstly, the unemployment situation is more common in origin place. Secondly, the most important reason was the changing attitudes and aspirations of returnees. They considered their previous job as a low-status job and hesitated to do the same job after returning. Many returnees aspire to improve the socio-economic status after the return. They believe that if they do the same job after returning, it would be very shameful. They would be considered as failure returnee to others. This kind of attitude was more common among the young aged returnees. Simultaneously, their educational attainments were not very conducive, and most of them were engaged as unskilled workers abroad. In this situation, many returnees preferred to remain unemployed and wait for better opportunities to secure their position and status after the return.

"I was very happy with my job in Saudi Arabia. I was working as a salesman in a shopping mall there. All the time, I was dressed in a good manner. I completed my higher secondary education from a Madarsa in my village. So with this qualification, I got a very good job there (Saudi Arabia). I was familiar with the Arabic language and would speak it fluently. I earned about 1700 Riyals and used to send money every month to my family. I returned to the village after my contract got expired. Now fifteen months have passed, but still, I am unable to find any suitable jobs. I will not do farming or any day labour work as I am not used to it. Hope I'll get a good job or a salesman job in my village or nearest town or else I'll again emigrate. It is challenging to find any suitable job in the village, but in Saudi Arabia, you will get good salaried jobs." (Returned from Saudi Arabia, 30 years old).

More than 40 per cent of returnees were engaged in the agricultural field after their return. They had their land to cultivate, but after returning, the percentage of farmworkers decreased to 13 per cent than before the emigration period. The rate of construction workers (14 per cent) increased after the return than before the emigration period (6 per cent). On the other hand, the percentage of daily workers reduced to 3 per cent than before the emigration phase (7 per cent).

The noticeable feature about the activity status among the Gulf returnees was self-employment. Before emigration, only 7 per cent of them were engaged in self-employed works. A large number of returnees invest their money in small enterprises. It resulted in a sizeable increase in self-employment (20 per cent) among the returnees. A few returnees, who were earlier unemployed, also started their own business. To maintain a good lifestyle, they run their small business (grocery shops, paan stall, chicken firm, packaged water supply, etc.). The low level of education among returnees act as a hindrance to get a better-skilled job in origin. But, no one among the returnee was a prominent entrepreneur nor had a sufficient amount of money to start a small industrial unit where they could also employ others.

The same thing happened to the driver category job also. Before emigration, it was only 0.6 per cent, but about 7 per cent of returnees were engaged as drivers after their return. There were no returnees who secured employers positions after their return to the origin. However, it was observed from the previous chapter that the proportion of failure returnees were more than successful returnees. There was a significant association between emigration's occupational status before emigration and after their return (chi-square= 187.37; p-value= 0.000).

"I had Kapil visa. I spent around 1 lakh on my emigration. It was mentioned that I was appointed as a driver in Kapil's house on my visa. So I was very happy to migrate with this job. But after reaching there (destination), I came to know that I had to paint 12 flats of my Kapil (employers). Being a graduate student, I did not agree to do so. I used to work for 20 hours there and felt very useless. After I returned home, I got admission to a computer course. Now I am working in a computer centre. Now, I feel more comfortable and satisfied with my job". (29 years old returnee, Beldanga block).

Occupations while abroad and after return phase.

Table 6 presents the occupation profile of emigrants while in the Gulf and after their return. About 70 per cent of emigrants did unskilled work abroad. Among them, the majority were engaged in agricultural activity (46.3%), followed by self-employed (17.5%), and few returnees remained unemployed after return (14%). Among 71 emigrants who got skilled work abroad, ten returnees got driver job, 16 return migrants were self-employed, and 28 returnees worked in the agricultural field. Among the semiskilled returnees, very few of them (8 return migrants) ran their small business and were employed as construction worker (5 return migrants) after the return.

From this table, it is observed that a good number of returnees were engaged in the agricultural field (43%) after the return phase. 20 per cent of them started their business, 13 per cent worked in the construction site, and 13 per cent chose not to work after return as they did not find any suitable job in the origin place. There was a significant association between the occupational status of emigrants while abroad and after their return (chi-square = 22.650; p-value= 0.066).

Occupational mobility between the pre-emigration and post-return period

In this study, we have categorized the occupational status of the Gulf return migrants in three groups, i.e. upward, downward and no occupational movement. Table 7 shows that about 35 per cent of returnees got upward movement in their occupation after their return. While most (46%) had no change in occupation, about 19 per cent of the returnees had downward occupational mobility after their return.

"My employer provided me training, and within few weeks, I was able to manage this work (carpenter work). In the beginning, I made different types of stools and other small wooden things. I worked for eight long years in this field. Over time, I learned how to carve out a bed, dining table, windows and all other wooden kinds of stuff. I learned this skill very well. Presently I am well settled and have started my own carpenter business in the village. Saudi Arabia gave me this opportunity. Otherwise, I would have worked as a farmer throughout my life. Now my living standard has improved to a great extent". (Age-48_ Stayed long 8 years in Saudi Arabia_ Worked as a carpenter there_ after return opened up his own business in the village).

"After my return, I am engaged in farming. Even I had done the same job before emigration also. During my emigration, I worked as a cook in a police station and used to get 1000 Riyals. They taught me how to make their special tea (Kawaa). I use to make tea for them. After I returned home, I have started to work in the agricultural field again. Now I have decided not to move again because I have sent my son to Saudi Arabia. My savings helped me a lot to send my son to the Gulf countries, as I did not have to borrow the money for it". (50 years old Return migrants, 2 years stayed in abroad).

This de-skilling was a two-level occurrence. The first level- took place when the emigrants went to the destination countries. At origin, many of them worked in different kinds of skilled or semiskilled sectors. But in the Gulf countries, they often had to take up unskilled jobs. De-skilling resulted from the non-availability of desire jobs in the destination and compulsion to stay and earn in the Gulf countries. The second level of de-skilling took place after the return. Some emigrants were able to acquire some skills during their stay abroad, but after return, they could not find any suitable jobs according to their acquired skills from abroad. Instead of doing ordinary jobs like working in the agricultural field, they preferred to remain unemployed after returning. Many of them were not be able to save much money to set up their own business, and this type of de-skilling phenomenon was more common among the young returnees.

"I paid Rs 50000 to the agent for getting a work visa for the Gulf country. I used to work as an electrician in Saudi Arabia. I joined my company as a trainer, and over time, I had acquired the skill. I used to earn 1500 Riyals. After eight years, I returned to my village as I felt very low there (destination). With my earnings, I renovated my old house, bought some agricultural lands. But now, I could not find any electrician job in my village. For the past two years, I am working as a farmer. Though the savings from Saudi Arabia bought a lot of development in our household, I will forget all my skills (electrical work). However, I plan to open a grocery shop to run my family in a better condition." (45 years aged Gulf return migrant).

The study has found that the workers end up with unskilled and undesired positions in the host country. It is also pointed out that workers tend to lose their original skills as there is no opportunity to practice in the host country. After return, they neither retained the skill they had departed nor gained new credentials to find themselves employed in a sector different from what they previously occupied. Even if there was any marginal up-gradation of skill, it was not suitable for the origin country. In this study, the stay of the emigrants in the Gulf is very short as their emigration is on a contractual basis. It is challenging for this short duration to adopt new skills and implement those skills after returning to the origin.

"I was working as a typewriter in Baharampore court before my emigration. But I earned very little. However, I decided to migrate to the Gulf country, and I was sure that I would find a good job as I have graduated with and technical degree (typewriter). But after reaching the destination, I had to work at a construction site as a painter. I was unsatisfied with my job profile. I stayed there (Saudi Arabia) for few years, and after my return, I open up a small grocery shop in my own house. During this long period, I completely forgot how to type and also my speed had gone down. Though I have earned quite a good amount of money from abroad, still I am not fully satisfied with my migration experience. I think I have wasted my skills and education degree." (36 years old Gulf return migrants).

Occupational mobility among return migrants by different background characteristics

Table-8 presents the predicted probability of occupational mobility (upward mobility, no mobility, and downward mobility) by different demographic and migration-related characteristics of returnees. Result suggests that age of the return migrants, educational qualification, duration of stay abroad, types of returnees, skills acquired, reasons for return and period of return were the significant predictors of occupational mobility among returnees. Among returnees experiencing upward mobility relative to no mobility, the predicted probability was 0.556 among the returnees of age group 20-30 years, 0.529 from age group 31-41 years, and 0.253 from age group 42-52. With respect to educational status, the predictive probability of upward mobility relative to no mobility was higher for returnees having a secondary level of education (0.558), followed by primary education (0.525) and illiterate returnees (0.369). Regarding the typology of the returnees, the predictive probability of upward related to no mobility was highest for conservatives (0.912) followed by innovators (0.787) and failure (0.308); however, the result was not significant in the case of innovators. The predictive probability of upward mobility relative to no mobility was higher for returnees who acquired skills abroad (0.618) than those who did not acquire skills (0.437). Similarly, among the reason for the return of the migrant, the predictive probability of upward mobility relative no mobility was highest for a low wage (0.530) followed by the expiry of contract (0.480) and prefer to work at origin (0.326).

Among returnees experiencing downward mobility relative to no mobility, the predictive probability of returnees having secondary education (0.239) was highest, followed by primary education (0.199) and illiterate (0.181). Further, the predictive probability of downward mobility relative to no mobility was higher for returnees who did not acquire any skills (0.206) than those who acquired skills (0.189). Similarly, the predictive probability of downward relative to no mobility was higher for those who stated expiry of contract (0.241) as a reason for return followed by low wage (0.177). Returnees who stayed for more than nine years (0.130) abroad had a lower predictive probability of downward mobility relative to no mobility, followed by 2-5 years (0.203) and 6-9 years (0.256) though the result was significant only in case of 2-5 years.

Self-employment among the Gulf return migrants

Gulf return migrants were asked about their self-employment status after the return. Around 65 respondents reported that they have started their own business after return and worked as self-employed in their villages. The self-employed variable has been coded as 0= 'No' and 1= 'Yes'. Variables like age at the time of return, educational level, acquired skills from abroad, amount of remittances sent to the origin, reasons for return, duration of staying at the origin, readiness for return, typology of returnees were taken as background characteristics.

Table 9 shows the adjusted odds ratio for the Gulf return migrants who have started working as self-employed after return to the origin place. The result shows that returnees of 40-50 were less likely to be engaged as self-employed after the return [AOR: 0.29; 95% CI: 0.12-0.72] compared to returnees aged 18-28 years. The likelihood of being engaged as self-employed after the return was higher among the return migrants who had primary [AOR: 2.51; 95% CI: 1.17-5.38], secondary [AOR: 2.79; 95% CI: 1.23-6.34] and above the secondary level of education [AOR: 6.09; 95% CI: 1.54-24.03] compared to those who were illiterate. However, the likelihood of returnees being engaged as self-employed was 4.36 times higher among those return migrants who had reported 'prefer to work at origin' as the main reason for return [AOR: 4.36; 95% CI: 1.87-21.81] than those who reported 'expire of contract' as their main reason for return. However, the likelihood of returnees being self-employed was significantly higher among the conservative [AOR: 17.36; 95% CI: 2.78-28.37] and innovator return migrants [AOR: 9.17; 95% CI: 1.99-24.48] than the failure returnees. The likelihood of returnees being self-employed was higher among

those ready to return to their village [AOR: 6.43; 95% CI: 1.92-44.57] compared to those who reported not ready for their return. Returnees who sent remittances of Rs 10000-20000 per month [AOR: 1.85; 95% CI: 1.19-3.76] during their migration period were more likely to be self-employed than those who used to send remittances of below Rs 10000 as to their family.

Discussion and conclusion

The paper focused on the occupational mobility among the Gulf return migrants. Here we found the occupational status of the Gulf returnees in three periods of the migration cycle, i.e. before emigration, during migration and after the return. This paper focused on de-skilling, self-employment after return, a skill acquired from abroad, upward and downward occupational mobility among the returnees. Gulf migrants have unique features that were predominantly young, less educated, and hailed from low socio-economic households. Previous studies found that most of them take Gulf emigration as a safety valve from their old age miseries (Nambiar, 1998; Arif, 2016). One crucial aspect of the Gulf emigrants is accepting any kind of jobs that came their way. Emigrants were ready to take up jobs which the local people refused to do. Emigrants readily accepted unskilled and menial jobs while in the Gulf. Croitoru (2020) also found similar findings in Poland that emigrants accepted any kind of jobs abroad. Still, the situation became change after the return, and returnee's more inclined to set their own small business in their villages. Two main reasons behind taking up any jobs at the destination were the salary which they received. The salary was much higher than the Indian standard. And the second reason for their readiness to take a job, even at worst living and working condition, was their anonymity in the foreign country. Their unfamiliar set up allows them to do any employment. One negative aspect indicates that most of the migrants returned home without having proper future planning about their jobs at the origin. Lack of information regarding employment in their villages leads to their inability to plan upon return.

The study revealed respondents engaged in the farming sector, day wage labourer, unemployment before their emigration. They mainly worked as cleaners, construction sectors, driver, cook, salesman etc., during their abroad period. They engaged some menial, unskilled and low skilled jobs in the Gulf country. After return, the preference got slightly changed and shifted to self-employment or preferred to remain unemployed. A survey conducted in Wuwei country in China also pointed out that return migrants are more likely to be self-employed than non-migrants. It depended on the return savings and the frequency of job changes during migration (Demurger & Xu, 2011; Piracha & Vadean, 2010). A study about Yemeni's return migrants from Saudi Arabia revealed that small businesses (small grocery shop, stationery shop) were among the most common investments that returnees would make. More than Ninety per cent stated that they started their business after their return home. The majority of business owners ran a small shop (Colton, 1993). A study of 300 return migrants in two West African states, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, established the relationship between international migration and entrepreneurship. The study suggests that work experience abroad is the most significant predictor of entrepreneurial activity among return migrants (Black & Castaldo, 2009).

A study by Mallakh & Wahba (2021) supported that high skilled return migrants faced upward occupational mobility after return than non-migrants in Egypt. Still, in our study, returnees were unskilled and semiskilled return migrant, though above one-third of them achieving upward occupational mobility after the return. A study related to international migration and return in Albania showed that past migration experience increases the likelihood of upward occupational mobility as emigrants get skill acquisition opportunities across destination countries (Carletto & Kilic, 2011). An article drew on data from the Mexican Migration Project and the Latin American Migration Project. It portrayed that migration to the United States increases the likelihood of upward mobility relative to non-migrants in the origin place (Cobo et al., 2010).

In contrast, this study revealed that work experience abroad does not cause any significant upward mobility among return migrants in any occupational group. The study showed that most return migrants had no occupational mobility between the pre-emigration and post-return periods. A previous study based on Kerala also portrayed similar findings that the majority of return migrants likely to return to their original occupation status after return (Abraham, 2020).

However, return emigration is creating severe socio-economic problems in the economy (Zachariah et al., 2001). Demery, in 1982 focused on the changing aspirations of migrants about their occupations that could lead them to frustration and job hunt. They hesitate to accept their previous jobs. In most cases, returnees show interest to take an independent job like starting their own business (Kayser, 1972; Thomas-Hope & Nutter, 1989). Returnees became selective after the return due to their changing aspiration and attitudes. Rajan & Saxena (2019) addressed that this kind of mindset among returnees emerged another class of "status-consciousness" individuals at the origin place.

Moreover, a significant variation has been found in returnees economic behaviour, lifestyle, and mindset between the two periods of time, i.e., before emigration and after the return. In this paper, the impact of international migration is observed, and the most critical aspects in this regard is the change of occupational mobility of returnees after their return. However, this situation also triggers off re-emigration. The study revealed that return migrants who were in their working years faced occupational challenges. Very few of them could bring some skills and experience acquired from abroad to their village.

In my understanding, this is the first study in West Bengal which tries to explore and examine the occupational status of the Gulf return migrants in the Murshidabad district. However, any generalization of the study findings was not possible for the overall district or states as this study is based on few villages of the Murshidabad district. The study results may not reflect the situation among all migrants returning from elsewhere as it focused only on the Gulf return migrants. However, the findings might not be generalized for the skilled return migrants from the Gulf countries based on semiskilled and unskilled return migrants. Along with the limitations, this study makes several new and critical contributions to the literature regarding the occupational mobility of return migrants. The low occupational mobility and lack of entrepreneurship among return migrants suggest that international migrants help to improve the financial condition of the household through diversified income streams but not adequate to improve the occupational status among the return migrants in Murshidabad district.

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Table-1: Indian states and districts wise, emigration clearances (ECs) obtained for the Gulf countries by RAs and direct recruitment by FEs for year 2019.

State(Rank wise)	United Arab Emirates	Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	Qatar	Oman	Bahrain	Total
State wise ECR,2019							
UP	18355	67605	11312	6499	7125	1953	112849
Bihar	15499	22639	2998	6833	4608	996	53573
Rajasthan	7776	12375	3189	2927	2032	531	28830
WB	4795	14192	2989	1395	1275	893	25539
TN	8510	6603	4037	1747	3025	863	24785
District wise ECR, 2019							
Gopalganj (Bihar)	4467	2998	359	1760	1119	221	10924
Siwan (Bihar)	4121	3477	415	1523	1010	257	10803
Murshidabad (WB)	262	7906	1089	105	168	86	9616
Kushinagar (UP)	2607	2502	637	910	963	215	7834
Lucknow (UP)	631	4949	379	433	576	182	7150

Source- MOEA, 2019.

Table-2: Socio-demographic characteristics of return migrants.

Background Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage
Current Age of RM		
20-25	56	17.0
26-30	79	23.9
31-35	49	14.9
36-40	55	16.7
41-45	39	11.8
51-55	47	14.2
56-60	3	0.9
Above 60	2	0.6
Religion		
Hindu	24	7.3

Muslim	306	92.7
Social Category		
General	16	4.9
SC	8	2.4
OBC	306	92.7
Family structure		
Nuclear	221	68
Joint	109	33
Marital status at the time of last emigration		
Unmarried	54	16.4
Married	273	82.7
Widow	1	0.3
Divorced	1	0.3
Separated	1	0.3
Education		
Illiterate	85	25.8
Primary not completed	48	14.6
Primary	115	34.9
Secondary	68	20.6
Higher Secondary	12	3.6
Graduation	2	0.6
Duration of Staying Abroad		
2-5 year	292	88.5
6-9 year	28	8.5
>9 year	10	3.0
Desired to emigrate again		
Yes	185	56.1
No	145	43.9
Numbers of move to abroad		
1 time	288	87.3
2 times	40	12.1
3 times	2	0.6

Table-3: Working status of the respondents before emigration during abroad and after emigration period

Occupations	Before Emigration	During Emigration	After Return
Semi-skilled (Service Workers)			
OT helper		0.6	
Cook		6.1	
Driver	0.6	3.6	6.8
Gardener		1.5	
Housekeeper		1.2	
Office Helper		0.6	
Cleaning		58.5	
Supervisor		0.3	
Security Guard		1.2	

Waiter		2.4	
Packing Food		1.2	
Skilled Workers			
Electrician		1.5	
Plumber		0.9	
Painter		1.5	
Mechanic		0.3	
Construction Worker (Manson)	6.4	5.8	13.9
Carpenter		0.9	
Salesman		3.0	
Manufacturing	0.6		0.3
Others (Mirror worker, Curtain setter)		1.2	
Unskilled Worker			
Agriculture Worker	56.4	1.8	43.0
Daily Wage Labour	7.0		3.0
Cattle Rearer		5.8	
Self Employed	2.1		19.4
Not Working/Unemployed	27.0		13.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table- 4: Occupations before emigration and while in the Gulf countries

Before Emigration	While in Gulf countries			Total
	Semi-skilled	Skilled	Unskilled	
Manufacturing	1	0	1	2 (0.6)
Constructional	3	4	14	21 (6.4)
Self Employed	0	2	5	7 (2.1)
Agriculture	10	39	137	186 (56.4)
Daily Wage	4	3	16	23 (7.0)
Unemployed	12	22	55	89 (27.0)
Driver	0	1	1	2 (0.6)
Total	30 (9.1)	71 (21.5)	229 (69.4)	330 (100)

Pearson chi2 (12)=15.67 Pr= 0.207

Table-5: Occupations before emigration and after return

Before Emigration	After Return							Total
	Manufac cture	Constructi on	Self Employed	Agricultu re	Daily Wage	Unempl oyed	Driver	
Manufacturing	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2 (0.6)
Construction	0	15	2	3	0	1	0	21 (6.4)
Self Employed	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	7 (2.1)

Agriculture	0	17	27	117	5	10	10	186 (56.4)
Daily wage	0	2	4	9	3	4	1	23 (7.0)
Unemployed	1	10	22	13	2	30	11	89 (27.0)
Driver	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2 (0.6)
Total	1 (0.3)	46 (13.9)	64 (19.4)	142 (43.0)	10 (3.0)	45 (13.6)	22 (6.7)	330
Pearson chi2(42) = 187.3798 Pr = 0.000								

Table: 6: Activity status while abroad and after return

While Abroad	After Return							
	Agriculture	Manufacture	Construction	Driver	Self Employed	Daily Wage Labour	Unemployed	Total
Skilled	28	0	10	10	16	0	7	71 (21.5)
Semi-skilled	8	0	5	2	8	1	6	30 (9.1)
Unskilled	106	1	31	10	40	9	32	229 (69.4)
Total	142 (43.0)	1 (0.3)	46 (13.9)	22 (6.7)	64 (19.4)	10 (3)	45 (13.6)	330
Pearson chi2(14)= 22.6495 Pr = 0.066								

Table-7: Types of occupational mobility between pre-emigration and post return period.

Occupational Mobility	Frequency	Percentage
Upward	115	34.8
No	152	46.1
Downward	63	19.1
Total	330	100

Table- 8: Occupational mobility among the returnees by different background characteristics

Variables	No Mobility	Upward Mobility		Downward Mobility	
		Predictive Probability	95% CI	Predictive Probability	95% CI
Age of the Return Migrant					
20-30		0.556***	(0.364, 0.747)	0.268***	(0.092, 0.443)
31-41		0.529***	(0.303, 0.754)	0.107	(-0.045, 0.259)
42-52		0.253**	(0.030, 0.476)	0.221**	(0.031, 0.410)
Above53		0.44	(-0.568, 1.448)	0.298	(-1.181, 1.778)
Education					
Illiterate		0.369***	(0.223, 0.516)	0.181**	(0.013, 0.349)
Primary		0.525***	(0.333, 0.717)	0.199**	(0.027, 0.372)
Secondary		0.558***	(0.356, 0.761)	0.239**	(0.040, 0.438)
Above Secondary		0.78	(-0.311, 1.871)	0.158	(-0.545, 0.860)

Duration of stay abroad				
2-5 Year	0.491***	(0.265, 0.717)	0.203**	(0.057, 0.349)
6-9 Year	0.410**	(0.018, 0.802)	0.256	(-0.077, 0.590)
>9 Year	0.61	(-1.330, 2.550)	0.13	(-1.693, 1.954)
Typology				
Failure	0.308***	(0.168, 0.448)	0.163**	(0.005, 0.322)
Conservative	0.912**	(0.241, 1.584)	0.088	(-0.584, 0.759)
Retires	0.000	(0.000, 0.000)	1.000	(1.000, 1.000)
Innovators	0.787	(-0.692, 2.265)	0.000	(0.000, 0.000)
Skilled Acquired				
Yes	0.618***	(0.402, 0.835)	0.189**	(0.043, 0.336)
No	0.437***	(0.229, 0.644)	0.206**	(0.021, 0.391)
Reason for return migrant				
Contract Expired	0.480***	(0.225, 0.735)	0.241**	(0.068, 0.414)
Low Wage	0.530***	(0.325, 0.736)	0.177**	(0.030, 0.324)
Worst Living	0.58	(-0.147, 1.308)	0.208	(-0.674, 1.090)
Prefer to Work at Origin	0.326*	(-0.007, 0.659)	0.227	(-0.099, 0.553)
Year of Return				
2004-2008	0.766	(-1.675, 3.207)	0.000	(0.000, 0.000)
2009-2013	0.466	(-0.154, 1.086)	0.236	(-0.632, 1.104)
2013-2018	0.456***	(0.276, 0.637)	0.252**	(0.065, 0.440)

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table-9: Logistic regression results of self-employment among the Gulf returnees after return in Murshidabad district with background characteristics

Self Employed After Return	AOR	95% Confidence Interval
Age at time of Return		
18-28 ®		
29-39	0.75	(0.41, 1.39)
40-50	0.29***	(0.12, 0.72)
50 & above	0.41	(0.04, 3.58)
Educational Level		
No education ®		
Primary	2.51*	(1.17, 5.38)
Secondary	2.79*	(1.23, 6.34)
Above secondary	6.09*	(1.54, 24.03)
Reasons for Return		
Expiry of contract ®		
Low wage	1.64	(0.71, 3.79)
Worst living and working	1.14	(0.30, 4.35)
Prefer to work origin	4.36*	(1.87, 21.81)
Typology		
Failure ®		

Conservatives	17.36***	(2.78, 28.37)
Retires	NA	NA
Innovators	9.17**	(1.99, 24.48)
Readiness for Return		
Not ready ®		
Ready	6.43*	(1.92, 44.57)
Duration of Last Stay Abroad		
Less than 5 years ®		
6-9 years	0.66	(0.20, 2.23)
More than 9 Years	0.82	(0.13, 5.27)
Skill acquired from Abroad		
Yes ®		
No	1.08	(0.48, 2.42)
Remittances Amount (Rs/Month)		
Below 10000 ®		
10000-20000	1.85*	(1.19, 3.76)
Above 20000	1.12	(0.30, 4.18)
Constant	0.01***	(0.00, 0.09)

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

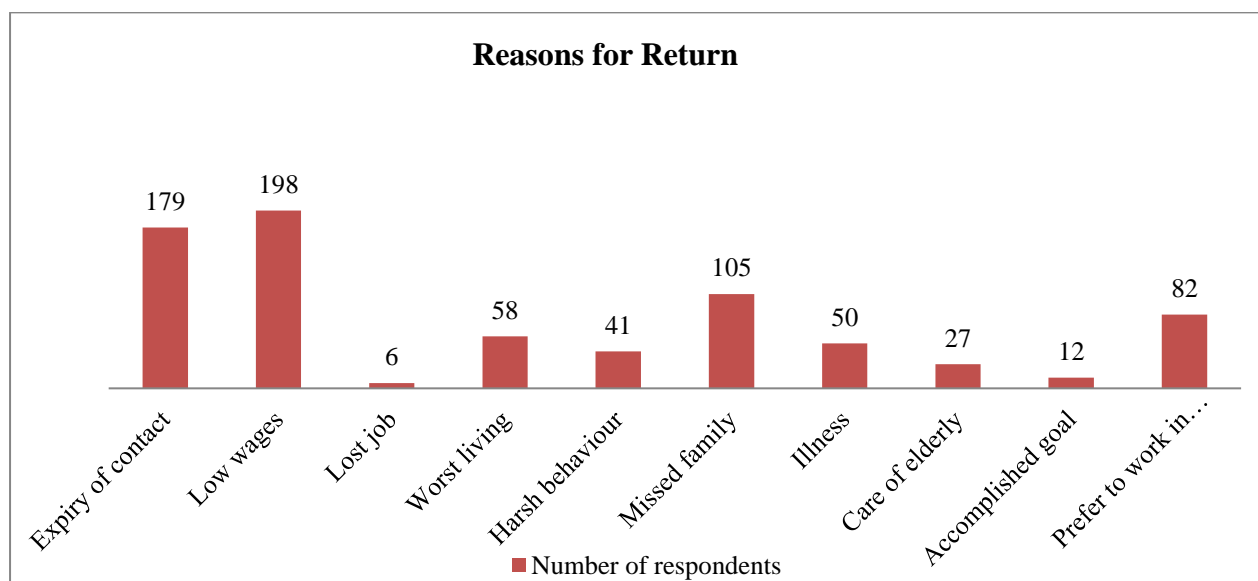


Fig-1 Reasons for return From the Gulf Country

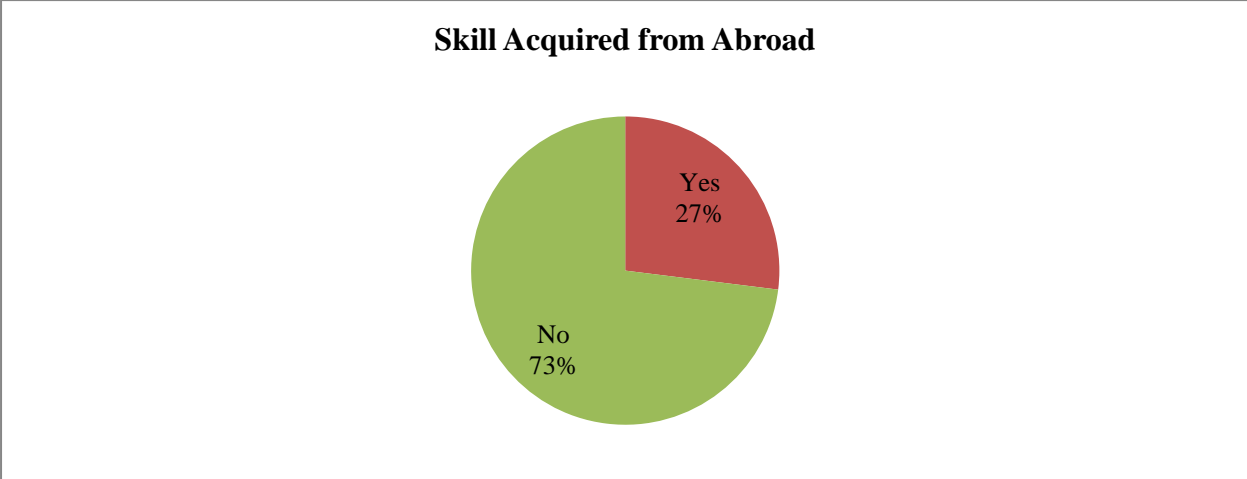


Fig- 2 Percentage of returnees acquired skills from abroad

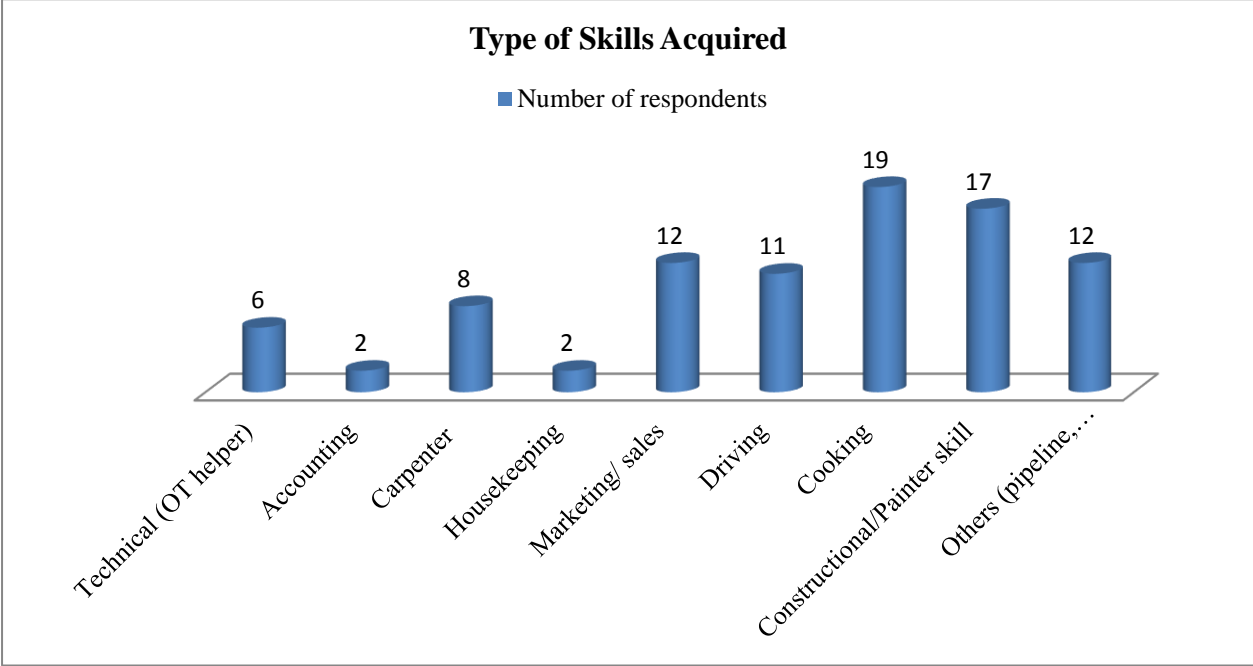


Fig-3 Types of skills acquired by the Return migrants